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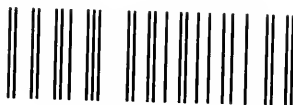
CONSTITUTIONAL HISTORY OF THE CONFEDERATE STATES

STATES."

BY ROBERT STILES.

From Religious Herald,
 Richmond, Va.
 1901.

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OF W. R. S.
RICHMOND.

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Not often have a writer so well versed in the history of the subject so unknown been brought into the subject, it is *terra incognita* to even of the best informed, most loyal, and more loving sons of the South, while the rest of the world is not more lacking in information than in interest with regard to it. Indeed, the deadness of the theme may be stated yet more strongly.

"Civil History of the Confederate States"! The very collocation of the words strikes the eye and the ear as unnatural, meaningless, even false. The blood-baptized Confederacy, that died in infancy over a generation ago, never breathed the blessed breath of peace. Born amid the roar of musketry and the thunder of the guns, and dying on the stricken field—what history had it apart from red battle? What time, what opportunity, what use, did it have for any other?

This is more than a mere rhetorical question. Our author himself admits that "there was little opportunity or occasion for civic ability." A moment's reflection will assure us of the justice of this statement. Every department, every agency, every power of the government, as well as every resource and effort and energy of the people, were strained to the utmost, for life. No officer of the government, no citizen of the Confederacy—at least, no worthy officer or citizen—even so much as dreamed of growth or expansion or development—of wealth or prosperity. No; all was absorbed in the consuming earnestness of the struggle for existence—the struggle against annihilation. And yet Dr. Curry's revelations help us to realize, as we have never done before, how this very concentration and narrowness of existence in the South during the war, while rendering utterly impracticable and out of place much of what is ordinarily termed statesmanship, yet induced a moral elevation, purity,

and devotion, almost abnormal, in the
as the military life and history of the

THE AUTHOR.

tempting any analysis of his book,
tioned for one word about the au-
both in personality and in his-
e marked men of our day. He
a generation enjoyed an excep-
tance with the leading men
both hemispheres, and has himself
and a factor of importance in current
events. His public life began early,
continued long, and has embraced an unusually
scope. Intensely Christian, and at the same
time intensely practical, he has lived his life, as
in these last days he is making record of it, in the
blended light of both worlds; and one feels that he,
as much as any public man of our time, has in
active life applied, as in history he is to-day apply-
ing, the very highest standards which can be
brought to bear upon human life and agency.

I well remember, when, as an aspiring college
student, I hung over the galleries of the House of
Representatives at Washington, drinking in the
great debate which ushered in the end, how my
pride as a Southern boy was stirred as I gazed
on two young Southern members, L. Q. C. Lamar
and J. L. M. Curry. One felt instinctively that
both were absolutely pure and consecrated; that no
Northern delegate surpassed, if any equalled, either
Lamar or Curry in learning, or culture, or general
ability, and that, in addition to this, they both pos-
sessed that peculiar and indescribable charm and
attraction which distinguish the best of our South-
ern people. More than once, after some able and
dignified action or utterance of the one or the
other, I felt almost like rising in my place and
shouting: "The civilization and social system which
produce such men can surely need no apology or
defence." From that day to this, I have never had
occasion to change my estimate of either of these
great representative Southerners. All will recog-
nize Dr. Curry's peculiar fitness to write this par-
ticular book; indeed, we can scarcely think of any
worthy substitute for him, either in specific infor-
mation or general capacity.

COMPOSITION OF HIS WORK.

A word now as to the composition and arrangement of his work. At first blush, just a shade of disappointment may be felt at the contents, as indicated in the headings of the chapters. So much space seems to be devoted to foundation, so little to superstructure; so much to the establishment of the rectitude of the Southern position, the legal and moral justification of secession, so little to the acts and doings and records of the Confederate Government; so much to the origin of the Confederate States, so little to the after history of the Confederacy. In so far as this is a just characterization of Dr. Curry's book, it is to be accounted for, in part, at least, by the consideration, more than once above referred to—to wit, that the Confederate Government was chiefly, if not alone, concerned in keeping supplied, meagrely at best, the Confederate armies and navies; but there is a yet deeper reason for the apparent disproportion between the two parts into which the work naturally divides itself.

Everything in the subsequent development and history of the Southern movement is necessarily dependent upon its original character. If secession was a groundless recourse of hot-headed, ambitious, and unprincipled leaders, then the final outcome, indeed the entire story, must be one of shame and infamy. It is the one great fact of the civil history of the Confederacy that its birth was legitimate, its origin justifiable and honorable in the sight of God and man. Not only is this feature fundamental, but it is this intense conviction of absolute rectitude at the start which imparted to the life of the Confederacy a dignity almost unparalleled, and to its death a pathos altogether unutterable.

OUTLINE OF THE ARGUMENT FOR SECESSION.

Let us glance now a little more particularly and analytically at this fundamental department of his work, which Dr. Curry seems properly to have conceived of as part of the civil history of the Confederate States. For his past work in this direction Dr. Curry is entitled to the undying gratitude of the people of the South. In none of his previous publications has he placed the Confederate South in any mistaken, or humiliating, or apologetic attitude; but has always rested our cause

upon a basis which perfectly comported with our self-respect.

But in his present work he has relaid these great foundations with the ability and confidence of a master builder. The first chapter, on "The Causes and Right of Secession," covering some thirty pages, and the ninth, on "The Legal Justification of Secession," covering nearly 100 pages, are, to my mind, not only unanswerable, but, while admitting that to each of us the unprejudiced intellect is that whose prejudices most nearly approximate our own, yet I cannot forbear saying that I believe this latter chapter is well adapted to impress and convince any intelligent and fair-minded man. At all events, a great and memorable addition to the literature of the great debate has undoubtedly been made in this last contribution of Dr. Curry. It almost savors of arrogance even to attempt any analysis or abridgment of an argument so full of matter and so palpitating with power; but, if we may be pardoned for the effort, we would say that, in this chapter and throughout his book, Dr. Curry has succeeded in doing what, in this very work, he has repeatedly said could not be done; that is, if he has not transformed his reader into a veritable citizen of each of these successive periods, yet he has at least transported him, with some appreciative grasp upon the real situation and surroundings, back to the era of the existence of the separate colonies; thence, down the stream of time, to their first gropings towards the establishment of fuller and more unfettered commercial relations between themselves; thence to the first Confederation, and thence to the "more perfect union" and the adoption of the present Constitution, the Missouri Compromise, the Fugitive Slave Law, the Dred Scott decision, the increasing sectional bitterness, the election of Lincoln, and the secession of the South.

He has shown, by contemporaneous history and the distinct utterances of all parties, at the time of and prior to its adoption, that the Constitution of the United States was a *compact*, in which the rights of the slave-holding States were recognized and conceded upon the one side, in consideration of and return for certain guarantees demanded by and conceded to the other side. He has shown that the parties to this solemn compact, upon whose acceptance it was expressly made de-

pendent, and whose ratification alone, in law as well as in fact, gave it force and effect, were the several States, and not the government nor the people of the United States.

In this connection, it may not be out of place to remark that the sentence, "We, the people of the United States," etc., with which the Constitution opens—as originally submitted and adopted, read, "We, the people of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York," etc.—the several States who were the real parties to the instrument being named *seriatim*; and that the committee on style and language, which probably had no purpose, and certainly had no power, to change the force and meaning of the paper, recast the clause in its present form, for the sake of brevity, and because impracticable to name in advance the States which would ratify the Constitution.

Dr. Curry also develops with great clearness and cogency the doctrine of granted and reserved powers, and shows that, among the rights reserved, by Northern not less distinctly than by Southern States, in accepting the Constitution and entering the Union, was the right to withdraw therefrom and to resume all powers delegated to the Federal Government. He comments upon the inability or indisposition of the Northern mind—in the domain of politics, at least—to grasp the distinction between principle and precedent or policy, and the consequent ignorance, as well as prejudice, touching the questions involved in the great sectional controversy. It is this failure to perceive or to appreciate, amounting practically, at times, to inconceivable ignorance, which made the long struggle of the Southern or slave-holding States to maintain their constitutional rights in the Union so weary and hopeless. In this connection, Dr. Curry mentions the astounding fact that a well-known writer on "Constitutional and Political History" declares that "the States had no existence anterior to the formation of the Constitution"; and, perhaps, more amazing still, that both Motley and Edward Everett affirm that in the Constitution of the United States the States are not named.

Dr. Curry also exposes the fallacious position of Mr. Justice Story, that the Declaration of Independence and the Articles of Confederation merged the separate colonies into a single nation, and the inhabitants thereof into one people. On the con-

trary, the Articles, upon their very face, and in the strongest possible language, negative any such construction or conclusion; while the Declaration asserts that the colonies had thereby become "free and independent States." It may be added that the expression, "united States," which occurs, perhaps, for the first time in the Declaration of Independence, so far from being employed as the baptismal name of a new nation, is really only an adjective or participial phrase descriptive of the then condition of the States—the word "united" beginning with a small "u," and the word "States" with a capital "S."

With great ingenuity and power, Dr. Curry dissects and destroys what he terms "the favorite allegation of Consolidationists, that the Constitution and the laws made in pursuance thereof are the supreme law of the land." Says our author: "No one questions that statement; but * * * who is the ultimate arbiter, in case of dangerous infractions?"

We much wish we had space for extended quotation from this part of Dr. Curry's great argument, embracing pages 220-242 of his work; for it is impossible that any abstract should convey a fair conception of the fulness and accuracy of his historical research into everything bearing upon the great sectional controversy, his familiar acquaintance with the prominent actors in it who were his cotemporaries, the logical acumen and all-compelling force of his reasoning, or the richness and charm, the trenchancy and trip-hammer power of his style. Especially in his discussion of the limitation upon the power of the Supreme Court necessarily inhering in our composite system of State and Federal governments—covering pages 220-224—does he give abundant food for careful thought. The pith of the entire argument is that the powers reserved by and to the States in the Federal Constitution, and especially by the tenth amendment thereof, "are not only reserved against the Federal Government in whole, but against each department—the judicial, as well as the legislative and executive; otherwise, the Federal sphere is supreme and the spheres of the States are subordinate." His conclusion, that the "States must decide" what their undelegated powers are, would seem to be unavoidable.

Finally, Dr. Curry graphically sketches the rise

and growth of the anti-South and anti-slavery feeling and frenzy in the Northern States, illustrating it by quotations from party leaders, journals, conventions, and platforms, and showing that all constitutional and statutory guarantees of the rights of the slave-holding States had come to be absolutely disregarded, annulled, and even contemned; that, in justification of this treasonable attitude, there was not even a pretence of a denial of those rights, but rather the open invocation of a law higher than the Constitution, until at last so completely had all sense of the rights of the South been obliterated from the Northern mind that, in 1860, the two Republican candidates for the Presidency bid for the party nomination by putting forth each his own popular catch-word or battle-cry—the one, the “irrepressible conflict between freedom and slavery,” and the other that “this country cannot last half-slave and half-free”; and so utterly besotted had the public conscience of the North become that no one seemed to be shocked at such an exhibition.

THOMAS K. BEECHER'S GETTYSBURG SPEECH.

We know not how better to close our review of this part of Dr. Curry's book, than by the following quotation from the memorable speech delivered by Rev. Thomas K. Beecher, younger brother of Henry Ward, at Gettysburg, on the 3d of July, 1888, in unveiling a monument to the Brooklyn Phalanx. In reciting the fact of secession, and the outbreak of war which followed, Mr. Beecher said:

“In 1776, thirteen colonies, by their representatives in Congress or convention, called ‘God to witness the rectitude of our (their) intentions,’ and declared themselves ‘free and independent States.’

“In 1787, these free and independent States proposed a ‘more perfect union’ in the name of the people. ‘We, the people,’ they said, in their preamble to the proposed Constitution. But—

“In the last article of the same Constitution we read of ‘the States ratifying the same,’ as establishing the Constitution between the States so ratifying.

“In 1788, by June, the States had so ratified the Constitution; and in 1789 an orderly constitutional

government came into power, George Washington its executive.

"In 1860-'61, four of these very States that had formed the Union, with seven other States that had been added, assumed to 'retrace their steps and cease to be members of the Union. They formed or had come into the Union freely, voluntarily; they proposed to go out by the same door. * * *

"Eleven States, acting in an orderly manner, by conventions lawfully called, retraced their steps with accuracy, and supposed themselves to have become once more free and independent.

"They went on accordingly. The old partnership dissolved, they offered to 'divide the effects by negotiation.'

"Now, it happened that certain ports, custom-houses, post-offices, and other real estate lay within the bounds of these States that supposed themselves once more free and independent. Real estate cannot be moved off. The soil remains in its place. It must be given over to the State within whose bounds it lies or stands. The United States officers must cease from function, surrender office, title, keys, and cash.

"This logical demand was made, refused, enforced by arms, resisted, and a great civil war began."

It may not be irrelevant—it certainly cannot prove uninteresting—to quote one other brief paragraph from this daring and altogether remarkable oration. Said Mr. Beecher:

"One and an ancient form of industrial organization has come to an end—chattel slavery. What is to take its place does not yet appear. The restlessness, envy, and even malignity, that prevail among our laborers in their voluntary servitude, so-called, chasten the rejoicings of the thoughtful over the downfall of responsible, conservative, patriarchal chattel slavery."

INAUGURATION OF THE CONFEDERACY.

Let us now hurriedly review the brief, but pathetic, records of the civil government of the Confederate States, as Dr. Curry has recited them for us in his invaluable book, all too brief in this department of it.

Beginning with the Convention of Delegates from six States, called to organize first a provisional and then a permanent government, we are struck

by the simplicity and rapidity with which momentous events succeed each other, when men are energized and consecrated by a great crisis, and think only of what they are doing, and not of how they appear; when the stage strut is solemnized out of them and the elaborate scenery and trappings of the theatre are forgotten.

The Convention met in Montgomery, Ala., on the 4th of February, 1861, and elected Howell Cobb, of Georgia, chairman. On the 9th, a provisional Constitution was adopted, a President and Vice-President of the Confederacy elected—each State casting one vote—and a committee appointed to prepare a permanent Constitution. On the 11th, Mr. Stephens accepted the Vice-Presidency; on the 15th, Mr. Davis arrived from Mississippi, where he had been organizing State troops; on the 18th, he was inaugurated, and very shortly thereafter announced his Cabinet. On the 26th, the Committee on Permanent Constitution brought in their report; by the 11th of March debate upon it was concluded and the permanent Constitution adopted.

Mr. Davis had not sought the Presidency. Dr. Curry says the qualifications and claims of Toombs and Cobb were quietly canvassed; they each had ardent supporters, but the rivalry was not pressed far enough to cause any ill feeling or delay. Mr. Davis, being notified of his election, promptly accepted the grave responsibility. "His inaugural," says Dr. Curry, "was marked by simplicity, directness, and frankness, * * * and expressed in strongest terms the wish of the country for peace." His entire conduct and bearing seem to have been characterized by a dignity and decision that well befitted the solemnity of the crisis. His firm, strong hand appeared in everything.

I may be pardoned for interpolating a very singular and striking confirmation of the choice of the Convention for President of the Confederacy. The Rev. Joseph Cook, author of the Boston Monday Lectures, was my fellow-student at Yale, before the war. He was then a somewhat unpolished New England youth, but perhaps the most majestic and forceful young man I ever met. His anti-slavery convictions were conscientious and strong, and as the great crisis came on, his excitement rose higher and higher, until finally he broke away from college and went to Washington; and there, such was his impressiveness of appearance and bearing, his in-

tellectual force and brilliance, that, without letters of introduction, he gained audience with all the prominent actors in the great drama. I remember that he was grievously disappointed in Mr. Seward, saying that he either failed to grasp the moral significance of the situation or else, for purposes of what he considered pardonable state-craft, purposely belittled it. But he openly pronounced Jefferson Davis the greatest man he had met, declaring that no other was his superior in general ability, and none his equal in appreciation of the gravity and solemnity of the crisis, in sincerity, in depth of conviction, in unselfish consecration to what he considered his duty. I remember that, in his impulsive and impressive way, Cook said, substantially: "I have heard one truly great speech; I have met one truly great man; I have seen Saul. Jefferson Davis to-day towers among his fellow-congressmen, taller than any of the people from his shoulders and upward."

THE PROVISIONAL CONGRESS.

Dr. Curry speaks in the highest terms of the composition of the Confederate Congress, recording the statement of Vice-President Stephens that he had never been a member of an abler body. He mentions their dignity and harmony and moderation, their appreciation of the grave responsibility resting upon them, the absence of excitement and bitterness. He gives graphic pen sketches of the leaders—Stephens, Toombs, the Cobbs, Memminger, Benjamin, and others. He emphasizes their desire for peace, and speaks strongly of the utter unpreparedness of the South for war. In another part of his work, he takes up formally the extravagant slander upon President Buchanan's administration, and particularly upon Secretary Floyd, in the widely current story of "the stolen arms"; that is, the alleged filling of Southern arsenals with government arms, preparatory to the secession of the Southern States. This absurd slander he utterly refutes by the most overwhelming evidence.

He calls attention to the fact that the provisional Constitution ordained that immediate steps be taken for the settlement of all matters between the Confederate and the United States "in relation to the property and public debt at the time of withdrawal, * * * these States hereby declaring it to be their wish and earnest desire to adjust every-

thing pertaining to the common property, common liabilities, and common obligations upon the principles of right, justice, equity, and good faith." The Congress without delay passed the legislation required to carry this provision into effect, and the President promptly appointed the requisite Commission. It was this Commission which Mr. Seward subsequently treated with such discourtesy and duplicity.

Dr. Curry insists that the permanent Constitution adopted by the Confederate Congress, and the entire course of their early legislation, evidenced their high appreciation of—indeed, their reverent attachment to—the Constitution and laws of the United States, while profoundly realizing that the Union had become a gross perversion of the Constitution. In this regard, as in others, the permanent Constitution speaks for itself, while "the very first enactment after the adoption of the provisional Constitution was the continuance in force, until altered or repealed, of all laws of the United States not inconsistent with the laws of the Confederate States." Indeed, there seems to have been no enactment of the provisional Congress but exhibited the desire and purpose of separating peaceably from the non-slaveholding States, and establishing relations of equality and amity with those with whom organic union was no longer practicable.

THE PERMANENT CONSTITUTION.

Obviously, the permanent Constitution was the principal work of the provisional Congress, next after setting afoot the Confederate Government; and in nothing was the conservative spirit which inspired the South, Congress and people, more clearly and strongly manifest. The permanent Constitution of the Confederacy adopted, not alone all the great fundamental principles and features of the Constitution of the United States, but also all, or nearly all, of its practical provisions, except where it was thought experience had developed some imperfection, or suggested amendment, alteration, or repeal.

On pages 274 to 304 of his present work, Dr. Curry, for convenience of comparison, has printed the two Constitutions in parallel columns; but he does not in this book, as he did on pages 192 to 213 of a former work, "The Southern States of the American Union," enter upon a full analysis and

comparison of their provisions. However, in Chapter III. of the present work will be found a very interesting and suggestive discussion of the points in which the Confederate Constitution is differentiated from that of the United States, and upon pages 65 and 92-3 succinct and admirable statements of its most important features.

PROVISIONS AS TO THE EXECUTIVE.

In further specification, it may be remarked that the Southern Constitution-makers sought earnestly, but in the main unsuccessfully, to correct the evils which had crept into the election of President; or, rather, the utter perversion of the original design of the Electoral College. They were more successful, however, at other points.

The tenure of the presidential office was fixed at six years, and the President made ineligible for a second term. Dr. Curry remarks that President Hayes, when asked at the close of his term to suggest necessary amendments to the Constitution of the United States, mentioned only these two.

Executive patronage was attempted to be controlled by limiting the power of the President to appoint to and remove from office. Except in case of Cabinet officers or those in the diplomatic service, he could remove only for cause, and that cause must be reported to the Senate.

With a view of fostering sympathetic intercourse, preventing and removing friction, and promoting efficient co-operation between the executive and legislative departments of the Government, the Confederate Constitution adopted in modified form one of the features of the British Constitution: that is, it allowed the Executive, through his constitutional or Cabinet officers, a seat upon the floor of Congress, with the privilege of discussing any matters pertaining to their respective departments.

GUARDING AGAINST CORRUPTION—PROVIDING FOR ECONOMY OF ADMINISTRATION.

The Confederate Constitution cut up by the roots the policy of "protection," by denying to Congress the right to levy or collect taxes, duties, imposts, and excises, except for the purpose of discharging debts and carrying on the government. The right to make appropriations for any internal improvement even to facilitate commerce, was also denied,

except for the purpose of furnishing lights, beacons, buoys, and other aids to navigation, and the improvement of harbors and navigable rivers; and the cost and expense of even these objects must be paid by duties upon the navigation thus facilitated.

The "general welfare" clause, the wide-open door to corruption and plundering of the treasury, was also closed. A stop was put to the abuse of the "franking privilege," by a provision that, "after the 1st of March, 1863, the expense of the Post-Office Department should be paid out of its own revenues."

To prevent "log rolling," and by this means the fastening upon the treasury of wasteful and pernicious schemes, which would stand no chance of passing either house, if each stood exclusively upon its own merits, it was provided, in substance, that, except upon the estimate and request of the heads of departments, through the President, Congress could make no appropriation without a vote of two-thirds of both houses, taken by yeas and nays. The President was also authorized to veto particular clauses in appropriation bills, and the initiative in disbursing revenues was placed largely in his hands. The Treasury was also required to publish at stated periods its receipts and disbursements, by items.

It is easy to see how, by these and other similar provisions, were barred out class legislation, unjust discriminations, sectional advantages, subsidies, bounties, partnership with corporations, trusts, "vast plutocratic combinations of corporate wealth," and the long catalogue of dire evils, flowing from a full treasury and demoralizing appropriations from it, with which the people of the United States have in these latter days unhappily grown so familiar. It is easy, we say, to see how economy and honesty of administration were likely to be thus secured; but whether, under such a Constitution and such a system, a country would be likely to enter upon such a rush of material development as that by which the United States have astounded the world, may well be questioned.

Changes were also made in reference to amendments, admission of new States, bankruptcy laws, jurisdiction of federal courts, citizenship, territories, alien suffrage, and the choice of senators.

SLAVERY AND THE SLAVE TRADE.

Provision was, of course, made for the protection of property in slaves; but, so far was it from being true, as charged by a prominent writer, that "the reopening of the slave trade was a recognized feature of the scheme of the leaders of the Confederacy," or that the framers of the Confederate Constitution were "conspirators, overthrowing the Constitution of the United States, and erecting a great slave oligarchy," that Dr. Curry says: "Speaking for the Confederate Congress, I wish to testify in the most explicit manner that no proposition was made in that body to open or connive at the slave trade, nor did a single member favor such an infamous scheme." Upon this subject both the provisional and permanent Constitutions of the Confederate States contained the most explicit and emphatic provisions, both having passed by unanimous vote, and that of the permanent Constitution being in the following words: "The importation of negroes of the African race, from any foreign country other than the slave-holding States or Territories of the United States of America, is hereby forbidden; and Congress is required to pass such laws as shall effectually prevent the same."

It is easy to trace the origin of almost every one of the above changes, and it would seem equally easy to see—indeed, impossible that a candid mind should fail to see—that they are the work of experienced and able men, honestly striving to guard against the defects, imperfections, and abuses from which their constituents had suffered in the Union and under the Constitution of the United States; and we cannot but agree with Dr. Curry that the condition of the country to-day furnishes impressive confirmation of the wisdom of many, if not most, of the changes introduced by the Confederate Constitution-makers. In short, after reading this third chapter of Dr. Curry's book, the reader will be ready to concur in the opinion of Vice-President Stephens, that the permanent Constitution of the Confederate States was not only a monument of the wisdom, forecast, and statesmanship of those who constructed it, but an everlasting refutation of the charges which have been brought against them; and in the judgment and prediction of Dr. Curry, also, that this instrument, when prejudices shall have subsided, will be regarded as a great

and memorable contribution to the science of government.

Yes! this Constitution, product of the first few and the only peaceful days of the Confederacy, constitutes a solid demonstration of the statesmanship of the Confederate leaders, who, alas! had little opportunity for further demonstration. After the storm burst, the condition of the country afforded little room for statesmanship.

DESPERATE CONDITION OF THE SOUTH.

Belted with bayonets, blockaded by fleets, pierced and divided by gunboats and invading columns, devastated by armies, plundered by marauding bands, laid waste by fire and sword, her cities shuddering with the boom of cannon, her fields trampled by the tread of legions—in short, life reduced almost to the simple conditions of savagery—there was little left in the South for a man of spirit, or blood, or breeding to do but to eat—if, perchance, he could procure food—and having fed, to fight. And this all men did, save a few of the very old and fewer still of the very young. The farmer left his crops, the merchant his store, the lawyer his clients, the doctor his patients, the pastor his flock; nay, even the bishop doffed his robes and donned his armor. The very officers of government, State and federal, deserted their posts and flew to the front. Members of State Assemblies and of the Congress—Dr. Curry himself among the later—abandoned the halls of legislation. Cabinet officers dropped their portfolios, and even the very President of the Confederacy chafed under his confinement and champed the bit that held him back.

In gleaning the scant civil records of these tense and terrible days and years, we cannot do better than glance over the headings of Dr. Curry's chapters, from the fourth to the eighth.

The action of President Lincoln in calling for volunteers, the similar conditions yet contrasted conduct of the several border States, the episode of the Peace Congress, the lofty choice of Virginia and her heroism in baring her breast to the onset, the gallant courage of the Confederate Government in leaping to her side and planting its flag and its capital in the position thus opened nearest to the foe, the heritage of imperishable glory thereby flooding this devoted and historic city—all these

are indeed superb themes, but comparatively familiar.

Dr. Curry tells us that, of *revenue*, in the ordinary sense of that term, there was almost none; certainly but a fraction of what was needed for the equipment and maintenance of the army and navy. The blockade very naturally reduced customs duties to a grim farce, and, in the opinion of intelligent foreigners, contributed, perhaps more than any other one cause, to the depreciation of the currency and our ultimate defeat.

Able to get nothing from without, the supply of the army required almost everything within our own borders, and everything—food products, horses, mules, and even slaves to work on fortifications—had, of course, in the general, to be collected by the harsh method of impressment; yet our people patiently endured it all. Because of the utter inadequacy of the currency and of every scheme, expedient, and device for extending and supporting it, resort was necessarily had to a direct *tax in kind*, and our author gives a pathetic flash-light revelation of the extremity of our destitution, when he tells us that "the farmer or planter was allowed to retain fifty bushels of sweet and Irish potatoes, one hundred bushels of corn, or fifty bushels of wheat, twenty bushels of peas or beans, and a certain amount for raising hogs."

As illustrative of the numberless ways in which this destitution was felt, Dr. Curry mentions the fact that paper could with difficulty be procured even for the transaction of these simple financial operations of the Government, which reminds me of one of the inimitable, boyish pranks of the idolized commander of our cavalry corps, General "Jeb" Stuart, whom I saw steal and carry off from General Lee's headquarters, where I had been sent with a message, a large quantity of fine writing paper, which had just been received through the blockade. I recall the nodding of his black plume and the merry twinkle of his blue eyes as they opened wide in admiration of the paper, which he proceeded at once to stow away in the legs of his big cavalry boots and the capacious bosom of his flannel shirt, keeping meanwhile his broad back to the adjutant-general of the army, who at the moment was busy dictating to a clerk. I remember, too, the peculiar unction and fervor of his good-by to Colonel Taylor as he left the tent so stuffed with

his plunder that he had to be boosted and hoisted on to his horse by a couple of his couriers.

COTTON AND THE BLOCKADE.

There was but one point of power, one ray of hope, in all the dark and darkening prospect. If there was any truth and power in the slogan of the sanguine, "Cotton is king," then it might well be that our federated republic, under the banner and leadership of this mighty sovereign, should take its place among the nations of the world. I believe there was truth and power in it; I believe cotton was king; but the graphic alliteration credited to the brilliant Alabamian, William L. Yancey—who, by the way, must have uttered it, if at all, after his return from Europe—gives the whole situation in a nutshell and touches the weak and sore spot: "If cotton be king, he is a monarch cabinned, cribbed, confined." He was certainly a monarch shut off from his throne, barred out of his proper dominions.

The *blockade* did it; the blockade was the mighty serpent that wound itself about us, shutting out what we wanted in, and shutting in what we wanted out, till, in its tightening coil, we starved and choked and gasped and died. It is a marvellous, a well-nigh incredible story, in every aspect exaggerated, almost unearthly. So great was the peril, so dazzling the prize, that the most renowned ships and seamen of the world engaged in the wild game of blockade-running; one, at least, of world-wide reputation, Hobart Pasha, who had been an admiral in command of a great European fleet. So much for the awful power and effect, the intoxicating hazard and romance, of the blockade.

As to the power of *cotton*, Dr. Curry graphically depicts what dire distress the absence of it effected in the manufacturing districts of Great Britain, and how for a time it dominated the public sentiment of the British nation. If the lack of it accomplished so much, what would the supply of it, through our hands and under our control, have accomplished? If our cotton loan and cotton bonds stood for a time at a premium in the markets of Europe, notwithstanding the chances against our success, what would the cotton itself have brought, if, as Dr. Curry says, we could only have gotten it out and across the water and stored somewhere, for use by our able and experienced commissioners

in securing recognition and material aid? But we never did and never could accomplish this, and, as our author tells us, that portion of our cotton which was not captured by the enemy or burned by our own people to prevent it falling into their hands, during the war, remained to the close, to be then consumed in the final conflagration, or to enrich the bummers and hangers-on of the Federal armies, as they swarmed over the almost swooning body of the prostrate South, in the spring and early summer of 1865.

FOREIGN RELATIONS—FEDERAL DUPLICITY.

As to our *foreign relations*—we never had any. It is pitiable, even humiliating, to note how our accredited envoys sneaked across the water from Northern ports, or dashed through the blockade at the peril of their lives, or were dragged like pirates or fleeing criminals from under the protection even of the Union Jack of England.

Although it is generally felt that Mr. Lincoln himself cannot be entirely cleared from the charge of insincerity and double dealing, in his several interviews with the commissioners from the South, yet it is a relief to the writer personally that Dr. Curry treats rather of the duplicity of Seward. Cold-blooded, cunning, crafty, cruel, treacherous, Mr. Seward has always been to me the most objectionable and repulsive of all the advisers of Mr. Lincoln. I preferred even Secretary Stanton himself; for there was about him, at times, the real heat of genuine passion, and I have myself known of his doing impulsive and manly and generous things. If William H. Seward was ever charged with or convicted of anything of the kind, I, at least, have never heard of it. Certainly, in the light of the revelations of Dr. Curry's book and of the documentary history of what occurred between Judge Campbell and Mr. Seward, to which our author refers and from which he freely quotes, it cannot be questioned but that Dr. Curry is justly entitled to his chapter heading, "The Duplicity of Seward"; nor that Judge Campbell was fully authorized to write, as he did, to Mr. Seward: "The commissioners who received these communications conclude they have been abused and overreached. The Montgomery Government hold the same opinion * * *"; nor that President Davis was authorized to say, as he did say to the Confederate

Congress: "The crooked paths of diplomacy can furnish no example so wanting in courtesy, in candor, in directness, as was the course of the United States Government towards our commissioners in Washington."

There are other topics treated of in Dr. Curry's valuable book; for instance, the unanimity and enthusiasm of the Southern people at the outset of the great struggle and their devoted courage to the end, the peculiar devotion of our women, a comparison of the armies and resources of the North and of the South, religion in our camps, privation at our homes, the strong individuality of the several States, and other kindred topics. But, while certainly not lacking in interest, this is all more or less familiar ground, and will be passed by with the assurance that these portions of the work will well repay perusal.

STRUGGLE FOR RECOGNITION AND FINANCIAL AID.

We desire to call attention to but one additional feature, already briefly alluded to, which really afforded almost the only field for even so much as an effort at statesmanship. We refer to the struggle of the rival envoys of the Confederate States and the United States in the markets and the courts of Europe—the one party striving to secure, the other to defeat, a loan to the Confederate Government; the one to compel, the other to prevent, the recognition of the Confederacy.

The personnel of these commissions is interesting. Dr. Curry mentions, on the side of the United States, Robert C. Winthrop, Edward Everett, J. P. Kennedy, Archbishop Hughes, Bishop Mellwaine, William M. Evarts, Henry Ward Beecher, and Thurlow Weed; upon the Southern side, James M. Mason, John Slidell, L. Q. C. Lamar, William L. Yancey, A. P. Rost, A. D. Mann, and Duncan F. Kenner. They were not all appointed at the same time, nor with the same powers, and some of them, particularly upon the Northern side, declined to accept. The struggle was close and tense, as well in the markets of the world as in the salons and offices of the diplomats. A full revelation of all that occurred would constitute a thrilling story. Charles Francis Adams was at the time Minister Plenipotentiary from the United States to the Court of St. James, with good reason honored with the entire confidence of his Government, whose envoys were

instructed not to interfere in any way with the Minister.

As before intimated, it affords the strongest evidence of the dominating influence of cotton that, despite the best efforts of the emissaries of the United States to prevent, embarrass, and depreciate the Confederate loan, our cotton bonds were rated for quite a long period at a premium of 5 per cent.

Nor was the contest for *recognition* any less close and exciting. Both Great Britain and France actually recognized the belligerent rights of the Confederate Government, and both were for many months on the very point of full recognition of the independence of the Confederacy. Perhaps the strongest demonstration cited by Dr. Curry of the intensity of the struggle is that it determined the attitude of the United States toward the treaty of Paris. That Government had originally, in 1856, declined to sign the convention, because unwilling to give up privateering, which it abolished. Mr. Adams indicating that his Government was now ready to sign, Earl Russell insisted upon the insertion in its acceptance of a clause providing that "the convention should have no bearing, direct or indirect, upon the internal difficulties now prevailing in the United States." The whole object of the Washington Government, says Dr. Curry, in becoming at that late date a party to the Declaration of 1856, being to call on Great Britain and the other treaty powers to help suppress Confederate privateering, the United States refused to accede to Lord Russell's requirement, and to this day this country has never become a party to the Declaration of 1856. The Doctor adds, what is perhaps still more interesting and impressive, that the Confederate Government accepted four articles of the Paris Convention—declining, however, to surrender privateering—and thus, as Mr. Blaine said, actually "became a party to an international compact."

As Dr. Curry does not to any considerable extent specify the parts taken by the individual commissioners, or their relative weight and influence in bringing about the result—especially not as to those from the United States—a single suggestion in this direction may be pardoned. While it has been generally understood that most of these appointments were made by the State Department, Mr. Beecher has always been considered the special selection

and appointee for this service of Mr. Lincoln, who was accustomed openly to speak of the great pulpit orator and platform speaker as "the foremost citizen of the republic." Beecher's public speeches in Great Britain, in advocacy of the cause of the Union and in resistance of the almost overwhelming popular demand for the recognition of the Confederacy, have generally been regarded as the most remarkable platform efforts of this remarkable man; indeed, as, perhaps, the most impassioned and irresistible harangues ever heard in any country since the great campaign of Peter the Hermit. It has always been the personal belief of the writer that our failure to secure the full recognition of the Confederacy by the British Government was due more to the efforts of Henry Ward Beecher than to those of all the balance of the envoys, emissaries, and commissioners of the United States combined.

CONCLUSION.

The brief, sad story is told—much of it for the first time. It is not perceived how any fair-minded man can rise from the perusal of it with the impression that the Confederate leaders were "conspirators, attempting to overthrow the Constitution of the United States and to erect a great slave oligarchy," or that the Southern people were deluded, and either led or driven by these ambitious and unprincipled men into "insurrection," or "rebellion," or into a war in which they felt no real, original interest. Nay, it is not perceived how the candid reader can fail, from a careful reading of Dr. Curry's book, to receive impressions and form convictions the very reverse of these, even though his preconceived opinions may have been of the general character first indicated.

For my own part, and especially as a Confederate soldier, I feel impelled to return my hearty thanks to Dr. Curry for his revelations—albeit not so full in some departments as I, perhaps without good reason, had anticipated—of the life and history, the inspiring motives, the governing principles, the ultimate views and purposes, of the civil Government of the Confederate States, and its deadly struggle against the irresistible powers and prejudices arrayed against it—phases of the great conflict to which, in our heedless, happy youth, we paid but

little attention, and as to which we then had no opportunity of informing ourselves.

In those halcyon days, when life was sweet and seemed to be of priceless worth, I unhesitatingly pledged it, with all my heart and soul, to the cause of the South; while thousands of glorious youth—my companions, yet far above me in aspiration and talent and character and promise—actually yielded up their lives in bloody, but unavailing, sacrifice upon the same devouring and insatiable altar. In those grand days, we knew full well the purity and intensity, the loftiness and devotion, of the soldier life of the Confederacy. But to-day, not far from the end, the hot heart-throbs of youth long past, and the slow-beating, cautious, calculating pulses of age having taken their place, it is a deep, calm joy to have the curtain drawn aside from the "Civil History of the Confederate States"—an image and presentment we have never before seen—to gaze upon the pure, still features, and to feel a new and deeper assurance that our beloved was all, and even more than all, she seemed to us in youth to be.

Nor do we comprehend how any right-minded Northern man can take exception to such feelings and expressions upon our part. Many a noble woman, second wife of a noble man, when asked her preference as to the portrait of her whose place she has taken, whether it should be removed or carried to some less public part of the house, has replied, not without a kindling protest of gentle indignation: "No, no! If untrue to her to-day in memory, you could not be true to me in actual presence. Let her remain where she is; not hidden in some closet, where you could go, in secret and apart from me, to worship and to weep. Here, in open day, in our own room, or in the best room in the house, is the place for the woman who had the good sense and the true heart to love you then as I do now, and to whom you gave your golden youth as you are giving to me your maturer years."

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